

# Adams CD Essay Contest Awards Talented Youth

Thursday, 12 February 2009

Every year Adams CD invites the sixth grade students of Ritzville, Lind, Washtucna and Benge to participate in an essay contest.

In the past, an employee of NRCS has presented the topic to the students, but this year Niki Young, Adams CD Resource Technician, created a PowerPoint presentation and went to the schools to explain how the contest works.

The topic of this years contest was "My role in the environment is important." Students picked an aspect of the environment, living or inanimate, to research and then wrote about its role and how it functions as part of the biodiversity of Adams County.

Adams CD Board members recently judged a total of 43 entries, and selected the three overall winners, you can click the read more link below to read the three essays that won overall first, second, and third place.

For more information regarding the essay contest, please contact Niki Young.

Your Friend the Sun  
By Gail Harder, Washtucna  
Over-all First Place Winner

Radiant, magnificent, beautiful. I am the one, the only — The Sun. What would any specimen of mankind do without me? Precisely. The world would perish. Energy revolves around my power; as does the revolution of the earth, the other planets, gravity and the earth's heat. Among the most radiant stars in the galaxy, I am the most magnificent of them all. I don't want to brag, but I do believe that my radiance does give off most of the earth's warmth and gratitude. I mean, what type of a person doesn't enjoy a bright, beautiful, sunshiny day? Exactly. Every specimen I know of knows my name, appreciates what I am and is engrossed in my beauty.

As I said before, every specie of creation relies on my energy as a faculty to living, growing and working. All you farmers out there know how important I am, of course. Who, or what, do you think gives you all the energy for your crops to grow? Me, the sun! Or Sol, if you speak Latin. How do you think you get all that energy to wake up in the morning and go out and feed your cattle? The sun gives it to you. If you think about it, logically, you come around to the conclusion that the greatest star in the universe (the sun) gives you plenty of energy to survive.

Some people fail to realize the main reason for photosynthesis. Most people don't even know what it is! I have to know it since I am the source of it all. Photosynthesis is the process that goes like this. First, sunlight, or myself, hit a green section of a plant commonly being the leaves. When I strike this leaf, I ignite the chlorophyll in the plant so that the plant can be subdued with the pleasure of getting its food from the chloroplasts where the chlorophyll is found. As the carbon and sugars combine, the plants start to wonder how they would get along without the energy and support I give them, which I have come to realize, is one of the reasons why I am still around!

When you wake up in the morning on a bright, sunshiny spring day, you step outside and breath in all the oxygen and think, "Oh what a beautiful morning! The sun sure is shining today!" But what you fail to realize on a gloomy and rainy day when you say "Oh dear, the sun isn't shining today," is that in fact I still am shining. Though you can't see me, I am producing the heat of the world so we don't freeze to death, as well as nitrogen for all the plants. Even though the distance from me to the earth is quite far, almost 93 million miles, I am perfectly placed. You see, if I was to be any closer to the earth, every man, woman and microscopic organism, would be fried. If I were to be any farther away, the world would freeze. That my fellow citizens, is a fact.

So, my successful farmers of Washington, now it's your turn. I have faith in you America to visit me in my lonely intergalactic dwelling. I know that when you think of it, the idea sounds impossible. But this IS America, the land of opportunity. Go forth and strive for excellence. Who knows? Maybe someday mankind will venture into the unknown, the mysterious — The Sun.

## My Important Role By Grayson Whitaker, Lind Over-all Second Place Winner

I have an important role in the environment. I am a burrowing owl and I live in burrows in the ground. I have long legs, a round tuft less head and yellow eyes. My feathers are light brown with a little white and my throat and eyebrows are white. I am about 9.5 inches long, weigh about five ounces and have a wingspan of about 21 inches. I, unlike other owls, am active day and night. I am important to the environment because I am part of the ecosystem. I provide food for my predators including domestic cats, weasels, skunks, domestic dogs, coyotes and hawks. In turn, I prey on large invertebrates, small mammals, birds and insects. Humans benefit because I help keep the population of insects and mice down. My diet is varied and often depends on the time of year. I am a good animal to keep around because I can survive on several different kinds of food instead of dying off because my food supply dried up. If I did not exist, a good food source for my predators would disappear and there would be many more pests around because I would not be feeding on them.

My favorite places to nest are on flat open terrain with soft soil, short grass and some vegetation scattered around, often referred to as the shrub-steppe habitat. I sometimes nest in the unplowed corners and edges of a pivot irrigation circle. I live in burrows in the ground but I depend on other animals to make my home because I cannot dig my own nest. A ground squirrel may start my home, and then the coyote will catch and eat the ground squirrel and make my home bigger. Then, when the coyote leaves, I make it my home. I make good use of homes already built and am helpful to the environment because I use cow chips, horse manure, grass, pellets and feathers for my nest, natural things that might otherwise be wasted. I neither create waste nor destroy the environment, but instead utilize what the environment has given me.

I am also important to humans because I provide entertainment and education. I am a wonderful sight to see, sitting on fence posts and flying around. Kids and adults love to just observe me. They especially like it when they happen to see me catch a mouse. They also love to see a hawk catch me, which of course, I hate but that is part of my job. My burrows spark the curiosity of youngsters who like to throw dirt down them. I wish they would not do that but stay hidden from their sight because I am afraid.

I am one of the most adaptable animals to human activity so it would be a good idea to have me around. Many other animals are not so adaptable and simply cannot survive where humans are active. However, many things are threatening my survival. Farmers are becoming more efficient and are not leaving the corners for me to nest in and as farmers farm more land, the shrub-steppe habitat that me and other wildlife depend upon is lost. Humans are getting rid of the ground squirrels and other mammals that I rely on to build my home and sometimes they even poison us unintentionally with pesticides. Some efforts, like making us artificial burrows are being done, but really, we like the natural ones better. I am part of the ecosystem and when one part is destroyed, other parts are destroyed as well because we all depend upon each other for survival. So please let us focus on keeping all the parts of our ecosystem working.

## How a Tree Helps the Environment By Kate Schell, Ritzville Over-all Third Place Winner

A tree helps the environment in many different ways. I have three topics that I will talk about. I will talk about how trees help the air that we breathe, how trees help the ground and how trees help the living things in our world.

Trees help the air that we breathe. Trees provide the oxygen we breathe. One acre of trees produces enough oxygen for 18 people to breathe each day and eliminates as much carbon dioxide from the air as is produced from driving a car 26,000 miles. Trees help trap and remove tiny particles of soot and dust which otherwise damages human lungs. Forty trees will remove 80 pounds of air pollutants annually. As you can see, trees help the air all around us.

Trees help the ground soil. Trees prevent soil erosion. Roots from the trees help hold soil in place on the ground. Soil will not blow away due to wind, or be washed away from the rain as easy. Roots stabilize soil and prevent erosion that would otherwise become silt. Silt destroys fish eggs and other aquatic wildlife and makes rivers and streams shallower. This causes more frequent and more severe flooding. Trees along streams hold banks in place to protect against flooding.

Trees help the living things in our world. Trees are good for wildlife. A mature oak tree can provide support for over 460 different species of insects, birds and mammals in shelters and hollows, as well as fruit, flowers and foliage that attract a huge variety of birds and insects. Trees provide useful products. This is the most obvious and direct benefit that trees can provide. Even in towns, trees provide traditional products such as timber and fruit as well as new products, including wood chip mulch and renewable fuel.

These are the reasons how trees help the environment. I have talked about how trees help air, how trees help the ground soil and how trees help the living things in our world. I hope you learned something from my essay.